

John Elliott

admitted March 15th 1820

A dissertation on the medicinal properties of Oleum  
Terebinthinae

Mix a short folly with thy laboured schemes,  
tis a joyous folly that unbends the mind.

The subject I have adopted as a matter of investigation, although deservedly occupying a prominent station in the Materia Medica, from its peculiar powers, in arresting some of the most distressing, and pestiferous diseases, with which human nature can be afflicted; yet so much attention has lately been directed to it, its properties so ably discussed, and accurately designated, as, to leave, apparently, nothing omitted that would further elucidate its <sup>application</sup> ~~properties~~, or render it more extensively useful. But the same objection equally applies to most subjects, that are important in their influence, or useful in practice; each of them have been analyzed with indefatigable industry; and although our efforts frequently prove futile, or abortive, notwithstanding, as we are not acquainted, with any means of as-

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certaining the limits of usefulness of any substance, only from experience, further investigations, authorizes us in anticipating further discoveries, and in establishing more correct, and definite results. Although perhaps its properties are partly definitely settled, there is not a perfect unanimity of sentiment as it respects its application. However, I do not presume to have directed it of uncertainty, or to have reconciled the fluctuating and discordant state of opinion, with which it is invested; my circumscribed opportunities of practice, precluded the satisfactory conclusion, of adding facts from my own experience, in support of every position I may advance. I have witnessed its salutary effects in many instances of Dr. Huxham's practice; and I conceive, that from the fairest analogy, its use may be extended further than has yet been particularized, and after its ultimate point of usefulness has been decided, it still remains a subject of curious & interesting speculation. Superseding its utility in the several branches of the arts and sciences, that are not immediately, or inseparably connected with medicine, its appropriation to diseases, admits of an extensive application; it holds indisputable claims to a rank amongst several of the distinct classes of the materia medica;

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and is exhibited to fulfill, respectively, the several indications of a discutient, emmenagogue, anthelmintic, rubefacient, stimulant, as an enema, and in some cases would answer as a purgative, and displays powers, not inferior, in many respects, to most of its congener articles. As a rubefacient, applied to the healthy skin, it produces inflammation, and a vesicular eruption, something analogous to blistering in a slight degree. With this intention, it is much prescribed in rheumatisms, in sprains and swellings of the joints, in the affections of the throat, in pleurodynia and even in some of the deeper seated inflammations, Dr Chapman. In popular practice, the turpentine is taken, internally, in solution to relieve sciatica and lumbago, and I believe, frequently with success; at least the beneficial consequences resulting from it, in cases that <sup>have</sup> been, were attributed to its use, no other medicine being resorted to, <sup>even</sup> along with its internal exhibition, a plaster of stor-  
bugundy pitch, is worn on the lumbar region. I have seen it used in cynanche tonsillaris, with very salutary results. It is recommended as a discutient in indolent tumors, paralytic affections, and chronic ulcers. Dr Cullen asserts, that it has been found useful in intermittents, applied as an ointment to the spine.

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The facility of instituting a remedial impression on the surface, and extending it through the medium of sympathy, to the stomach, will sanction this opinion; and, as the spinal marrow is the origin of the nervous system, and therefore more susceptible of impressions, and better qualified to extend it, it would also be more powerful and efficient, than when applied to a part more remote. In the same manner, ~~when applied~~ it might be useful in some of the intractable nervous affections, which depend on a concurrence of the mind, to constitute the disease; by the irritation it occasions a new impulse would be given to the mind, and the functions of the system also, would be renovated. What tends to corroborate this, is, blistering along the spine, proving effectual in curing tetanus, mentioned by Dr Chopman. Dr Caldwell, mentions its exhibition internally as well calculated, in preventing the impending paroxysm of intermittent. Mechanics are in the habit of applying it cuts, and other injuries that they are liable to, reporting favorably of its use; which perhaps is sometimes beneficial by cauterizing the vessels, and preventing the flow of blood, and thus accelerating the cure. Which is now considered nugatory or pernicious, nothing more being considered requisite, after removing

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any extensive matter, than approximating the divided surfaces, and retaining them so, or taking up the artery if the bleeding is profuse. In Paronychia it is generally combined with cantharides, to augment the irritation of the latter, it being almost impossible to excite inflammation or raise a blister, by any means, in this distressing affection; this is agreeable to my personal experience. Notwithstanding it is thus acrid to the healthy skin, in scalds or burns it exercises an action quite the reverse, arresting the destructive tendency that the fire had left in the injured part, by instituting, from its stimulating nature, a counterpoise of action, that totally obliterates the other. I believe no other explanation has been attempted, or considered, pertinent. It could not, with any plausibility, be referred to a chemical one. As an application to burns, it is usually combined with basilicon ointment, constituting what is called the Turkish ointment; which diminishes the violence of its action, and also renders it more convenient in its application; so that it may be accurately adjusted to the injured part, without implicating the sound, because, if suffered to be in contact with the healthy skin, it makes the patient uncomfortable, by the pain and inflamma-

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found numerous solid grains of the same. I have seen it in  
the strata in several instances of this kind. In one the recent  
recrystallization is better of the kind; the part was crystalline, in  
part a little more but not so much; but a very large part  
of it is now without much difficulty. There was not much was  
spread on cotton, which was much adapted to the case, and the  
one of the regular cases of the same. It is especially noticed  
gradually increasing the proportion of iron in it, that it is not  
in the harmony with the new, forming parts. Bloodletting was  
then resorted to, with occasional laxatives of sulphur and even  
of tartar, for the purpose of keeping the vessels regular, and also  
for arresting any febrile symptoms that might appear. These  
symptoms persisted along with others that at present are inexplicable  
in forming it; its palatable properties, and also coincident with  
analogical reasoning. "Chapman has used it in the atomic shape  
of sugar, but says, it does not taste so much a body. He adds  
that "as a diuretic it is a very powerful stimulant, directed espe-  
cially to the urinary organs." And that "much more use before  
with it in some of the vesicular affections, and I have understood  
several signs in the straggles from history, in glass and in alcohol

I thanked you  
 for your letter  
 and your  
 kind words  
 I am  
 after dinner  
 writing you  
 a few lines  
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 your  
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 John

I attended one case of nephritis, proceeding from gravel, in which  
the turpentine exerted essential benefit. However, its exhibition  
did not supersede, the other indications, in the mode of treatment.  
I find partly copious, and some purges of opiates, so to recover  
of it, starve occasionally; prescribing the turpentine in the quantity of  
fifteen drops, in the interval, with demulcent drinks. Provided  
salutary effects in these cases, it would not be absurd to say, that  
it would be beneficial in typhoid; the urgency of the disease to  
these parts, and the sympathetic congestion existing <sup>at the time</sup>, so as not to admit  
of it, that inflammation of that organ, would be operated  
on, by transferring the seat of irritation to the bladder, and the  
consequence so immediate would probably, ensue. It has been used, with  
success, in typhoid, but Dr. Cullen decides against it, as it is so much  
more to be kept as an antiphlogistic, and in cases of typhoid, with  
tendency of diminishing or expelling, stercor, from the int. <sup>intestines</sup> in  
increased irritation, it would occasion it, and informed that, it has  
succeeded with success in some instances, and considered it entitled to some  
share, and in the case I have mentioned, some actual cure, such as  
health restored. The same is an emergency, are not very satisfactory.  
On this point I have no experience, but no reconstruction is a cure.



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two times, when a worm was suspected of immaturity. Until  
all the symptoms subsided. The abdomen in the affected part was  
more violent, producing vertigo, pain in the head, and an uneasy  
sensation at stomach, with some sickness for all which were but tran-  
sitory in their continuance, and the result was a smart at the  
nose, after a few exhibitions of the medicine. I have not had an oppor-  
tunity of testing its virtues myself, in any, but simple case. Indeed  
this case the presence of worms was unquestionable, because a few had  
been discharged. I directed an Effluvia to be taken in the morning on  
an empty stomach, which was ~~prescribed~~ agreeable to my direction,  
but without answering any official purpose. 4th June, 2<sup>d</sup> 1796  
I prescribed a purge of Cal. it was in the evening, and the same  
quantity of the purgative to be repeated in the morning & finally some  
purging was the consequence, and the worm was expelled. It is  
visible properties would induce the conclusion, that it would be more  
opportune on such an occasion. So pernicious is the action, that it kills  
all insects that come within the sphere of its influence, notwithstand-  
ing the human system suffers no permanent injury, from loose. The  
expulsion of worms, it is capable of exerting two powers, each entitled to  
regard: if its enormous quantity, is alone, insufficient to expel

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the rest of men, as what he would the grounds of the events,  
inward, which appear probable in their nature, & more, and  
more of a more ambitious not appropriate with the necessary  
philosophical appearance. The more than that they would approach  
the ideas either by a relation, that is both the same position of the  
idea, that frequently removes extreme <sup>subjection</sup> ~~and~~ to different, part of the  
idea. However any supposition is more connected, than the relation, a  
quasi-<sup>subjection</sup> ~~and~~ position, as a mechanical process of the entire, as when  
them into existence. So the man who prescribes such ideas, also says  
that there are no other ideas, are not incident to a defect, and does  
not let it into the world, but begins any further elicitation of the  
subject. Although the disproof has been admitted, and although the  
proof, yet it is not wholly verification. But the patient that desires  
greater betterment, for its superior execution, is also not, or at  
least, to great ability in many diseases, are attributed to this. To begin  
general, pseudo-proper, that never defines the real, as actions, and  
not taking a new one, more consistent with the order of health, re-in-  
vigor is given to every function, to re-instate itself in its ordinary  
prospective actions. In arresting the vomiting, instead of  
giving it, in the same, in the same, in the same, not repeated to anyone.

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insoluble specific qualities. Dr. Chapman expressed this in relation  
to approaching to a state of gangrene, which is supported by ex-  
am, somewhat to what occurred in the case of Burns. From the  
kind of morbid deduction, he has extended its application to the  
fevers, that cause a similarity of nature, as glandular, peritoneal  
inflammation, typhus fever, profuse and high fever, and in most  
of the febrile affections depletion being proximate, & profuse  
the former stages. Dr. Chapman prescribes "C. 1816" repeated  
successively frequently, according to the nature of the disease, and the  
state of the system, it is more or less diluted with water. In other  
cases of inflammation not admissible, from a very long course of action, the  
medication must be administered with more prospective advantage  
than at the commencement: but when violent vomiting of dark wat-  
ery bile concomitant symptoms appear nothing can supersede its use.  
Dr. Chapman asserts, in the low fevers, when other diffusive stimuli  
is given much may be expected from this medicine. It was common  
remedy with me in the sinking condition of our winter epidemic,  
and I have, ever since, no much reason to be satisfied with its  
effects. More recently I have had occasion to use it, and with equal  
benefit, in the genuine typhus fever, — the hyperthermia has





been treated almost on a par with the others, that one or two  
are others in respect of view. But I have not immediately expressed, re-  
solved to let in the matter, "age of the complaint", exhibiting it partly  
and at the same time exhibiting other related with it, the relation  
is however perfectly an information. Although the position may  
not be as if perhaps, or of per se, it does not narrow the intention, yet  
it is not more arbitrary, or, it is repugnant to discipline, cannot in-  
tention, then it is strong, in the commencement of the complaint, the  
motion, however, the latter of which has a less clear, and, however,  
or to, not, good foundation, considering the source from which it ema-  
nates. Besides stimulation was injurious, the action of the system is  
so far from it, form an exception to any general rule; but has no  
exception, in fact, and there was, and therefore, for a certain  
time, to the mind. St. John's continues. - I will not say, such  
was, perhaps, my own experience, does not enable me to state posi-  
tively. Nor may be expected from the spasmodic affections of  
the alimentary canal, such as flatulent eruct, and sometimes  
from the violence put on the stomach. It is a case of prescription, of  
Doses of the pills, and with which he says he was most good, in  
such cases, consists of the pills of mint and turpentine. It is alleged

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3<sup>d</sup> particular, relates to parotid collected. "I have used it in each of the cases, in 2<sup>d</sup> & 3<sup>d</sup> cases, with success, without a surgical incision. And after the collection of about 5 grains of fluid, I used a small quantity of opium with the view to induce the effusion in the glandular tissue. It turns recommended in the former cases, but I have taken it in 2 cases, without success, although I was liberal in its use. In the 3<sup>d</sup> case, however, it succeeded, and appeared to command the disease. It has been recommended in chronic inflammation. It is the best remedy in parotitis, and is readily very readily of this affection, and is reported as a means of promoting the secretion & excretion with a view, possibly, to influence the action of the salivary gland. I have heard of its use in the treatment of the disease, but have not been found useful. In the 4<sup>th</sup> case, I perhaps the last incident, proper to be that, in an extensive, very dispendious disease. I have heard of its use in the treatment of the disease, with very conspicuous advantage. The method and progress that introduce the disease, before any affection of the gland, that could be supposed capable of communicating a sympathy in affection, is apparently, would justify the inference, that the disease was initiated in the stomach, and that the throat affection was but secondary or symptomatic of the general disease.

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The general reasoning, intelligence known to exist between the extremities, or different portions of canals, would suggest such an opinion without any concurrent circumstances. But, the depressed condition of the face, and the united testimony of the most skilful physicians, in ascribing the source of symptoms that it bears, to an inflamed state of the termination canal, continuous with that which affects in the throat, whether prepared by it or existing previously is not determined; but which, dissection has discovered, and limited them to a certain extent, cannot possibly demonstrate it to exist. To combat this action could be better adopted than the turpentine, at a suitable crisis of the disease. It comprehends the properties most proper in conducting the treatment; the purgative, stimulant, and diuretic. Also, stimulant it would be particularly essential in sustaining debility of nature, and changing the aspect of the disease. Also diuretic it would be advantageous to obviate that tendency of the system which is characterized by effusions at the termination of the disease. Hence even if it was attended with high fever, it should not supersede the use of appropriate remedies, as bleeding, saline purgatives & medicinal wine, vomits, & occasional aspersion of cold water. That is, to use modus operandi in these instances, is a mistake, but not

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force of sensation has yet developed. As no other element will accomplish the same indication with such promptitude and facility, doubt doubtably must exert an action distinct from any part of the life. It cannot act mechanically or chemically, including any medium ~~result~~, agreeably to those, though it may be various to any species of the system, suffers a change of position that will materially affect the result. That its salutary influence is wholly absent from any of its obvious or known qualities is probable, but that it exercises a sort of every day supervision, especially determined to some part, which communicates to the rest of the system, various exercises to meet the exigencies of the current economy, and, as we better with its color and series of actions. Perhaps, its unparalleled utility, in subduing morbid action, attached to certain forms of disease, may be attributed to its action on the urinary organs, determined to these parts with such specific energy, whether arising from a more direct communication between the stomach and bladder or material, however, many facts seem to favor this opinion, and efforts made of physicians, explorative, to have demonstrated it, as existing. Certainly, whether it is so or not, remedial applications are effected in this way with as much success and efficiency as any other, by concentrating excitement in the bladder or the contiguous parts, a revulsion is obtained, some

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thing analogous to the action of a blister, and relief is procured to the  
affected parts. Probably as a diuretic also its influence may be beneficial  
restoring this function its healthy action, as it is so materially deran-  
ged, and necessarily diffusing disorganization. Although it is certainly  
known that impressions are governed by the influence of a vital prin-  
ciple, Notwithstanding, its operations are concealed in too impercepti-  
ble mystery, its indications of action too illusory, to admit of establish-  
ing infallible conclusions, in most instances. As an emetic the tucopen-  
tine may be administered, very advantageously, in many of the bowel  
affections. Dr Bullen says he has found it to be one of the most certain  
laxatives that could be employed, in colics, and other cases of obstinate  
costiveness. I presume it might be used, very successfully, as an abster-  
sive, in this way. The formula of Dr Chapman, is made in the fol-  
lowing manner, by blending very intimately one or two table  
spoonful of the oil of tucopentene with the yolk or white of eggs,  
and afterwards add a full pint of water, or which is preferable, the  
thin mucilage of gum arabic, or flax seed. This is a very valuable  
prescription, under all circumstances of obstructed bowels, and parti-  
cularly of flatulent colic. I now conclude my thesis, and although  
perhaps not directed with a perfect accuracy of discrimination.

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had been it.

and judgment, yet, I think, it is done very near as well, as I could  
have done it.